

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 05136

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GW

SUBJECT: THE SPD ON THE EVE OF ITS CONVENTION

REF: BONN 5135

1. SUMMARY: WITH THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE SPD ONLY A FEW DAYS AWAY, THE MOOD WITHIN THE PARTY HEAD-QUARTERS HAS SOMEWHAT IMPROVED IN EXPECTATION THAT THE RADICAL LEFT WILL BE LESS VOCIFEROUS AND THE LEADERSHIP PARTICULARLY BRANDT HIMSELF, MORE ENERGETIC IN COMBATTING LEFTIST UTOPIANISM THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FACT REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT SPD HEADQUARTERS ITSELF IS UNSURE OF THE EXACT NUMBER OF RADICAL LEFTISTS WHO WILL BE AMONG THE 400 DELEGATES AT HANNOVER AND HOW THEY WILL SPLIT AMONG THEMSELVES ON VARIOUS ISSUES. AN IMPORTANT MEASURE OF THE REAL STRENGTH OF THE LEFT WILL BE THE COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD THE CONVENTION WILL ELECT AND THE WORDING OF SEVERAL KEY RESOLUTIONS, INCLUDING ONE REGARDING DKP MEMBERSHIP BY CIVIL SERVANTS.

3. THE GENERAL EXPECTATION NOW WITHIN THE SPD IS THAT THE MIDDLE OF THE PARTY BEHIND BRANDT, INCLUDING MOST OF THE TRADE UNIONISTS, WILL DOMINATE THE CONVENTION.

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THE SPD' S CONSERVATIVE WING IS PARTICULARLY RELIEVED THAT BRANDT WILL VISIT THE US SO SHORTLY AFTER THE CONVENTION, THUS INSURING THAT HIS WILLINGNESS TO DEFEND NATO AND FRIENDSHIP WITH THE US WILL BE AT HIGH POINT. BRANDT' S APRIL 5 BUNDESTAG ADDRESS (SEE REFTEL) OFFERS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE EXPECTATION IS JUSTIFIED. FURTHERMORE, AS THE CONVENTION HAS BEEN SPREAD OVER FIVE DAYS, MEDIA ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN THE FIRST SPEAKERS, SCHMIDT AND BRANDT, AND THEN PROBABLY DWINDLE SHARPLY AS THE VARIOUS DEBATES DRONE ON.

4. A KEY TO THE PARTY' S DIRECTION AFTER THE CONVENTION WILL BE THE DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE AND COMBATIVENESS DISPLAYED BY THE CONSERVATIVE KANALARBEITER WHO HAVE BEEN QUITE DISORGANIZED AND LEADERLESS SINCE THE NOVEMBER ELECTION. IF THE OLD GUARD, BRANDT, SCHMIDT, LEBER, VOGEL, AND WEHNER ARE PREPARED TO ENCOURAGE THEM BY LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST THE RADICAL LEFT WITH RHETORIC PRECISE ENOUGH TO BECOME POLICY, THEN PARTY LEADERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WILL BE ENCOURAGED AND WE WOULD EXPECT THE PRESENT UNREST AND UNCERTAINTY IN THE PARTY TO DECLINE. IF NOT, THEN THE SPD' S PROBLEMS WILL MOST PROBABLY INCREASE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A SPLIT WITHIN THE PARTY GROW ACCORDINGLY.
HILLENBRAND

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